



St. Louis Audubon Society



Tale Feathers

VOLUME 63, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 1996

Anthropologist to Speak at Audubon Annual Dinner, April 26

by Tom Day

The annual dinner of the St. Louis Audubon Society will be held at Agusti's Restaurant, 2300 Edwards St., in St. Louis (on the Hill) on April 26.

The featured speaker for the evening will be Fiona Marshall, associate professor of anthropology at Washington University. She will tell us about the 3.2 million-year-old humanoid footprints in Kenya, Africa, and her assignment to preserve them. She was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and speaks 5 languages. For our benefit she will speak to us in English.

The evening will begin with a cash bar at 6:30 pm, which is an excellent opportunity to meet interesting people who share your interest in nature as well as to renew old acquaintances. Dinner will be served at 7:30 pm, followed by a brief meeting that will include the election of new board members.

Dinner choices are an assortment plate of Agusti entrees, spumoni, and soft drink/coffee or an alternate vegetarian plate--please indicate your preference on the reservation form. The cost for the dinner is \$16 per person. If you have questions, please call Tom Day at 822-9695 (days) or 962-4064 (evenings).

A dinner reservation form is included on page 7. Checks should be made payable to St. Louis Audubon Society. Please send your reservation, to be received no later than April 19, to:

Katherine Chambers
St. Louis Audubon
7024 Forsyth
St. Louis, MO 63105

New Birdfinding Guide Now Available

BIRDS OF THE ST. LOUIS AREA *Where and When to Find Them*

Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Principal Authors: Connie Alwood, Dick Anderson, Paul Bauer, Randy Korotev, Jack Van Benthuyzen, assisted by others acknowledged in the book

This unique book:

- ◆ complements bird identification information in field guides with specific advice on where and when to find birds in the St. Louis area.
- ◆ describes more than 120 locations to observe birds, all within 50 miles of the St. Louis city limits in eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois.
- ◆ provides detailed directions to each location supported with 17 maps.
- ◆ reviews all 370 species of birds that have been seen, with historical information for the more rare species.
- ◆ shows graphically the relative commonness of each bird species and their changes in abundance through the seasons.
- ◆ tells area homeowners what birds they are likely to see in their yards and at their feeders.
- ◆ gives advice on finding St. Louis' most special bird, the Eurasian tree sparrow. The color cover has an attractive Eurasian tree sparrow painting.

The 5 authors have more than 180 years of combined birding experience. This book was entirely a volunteer effort; all profits from the book sales are used by WGNSS to fund programs in nature study and education.

Published in December 1995, the book has 192 pages and a spiral binding that lies flat when opened; the cover is double thickness and laminated for long life. The book is shrunk wrapped for shipping. The retail price is \$16.95, plus \$3 for shipping and handling.

Mail orders to:

WGNSS BIRD BOOK
P.O. Box 2085
Florissant, MO 63032

Make checks to:

WGNSS BOOK ACCOUNT

In the St. Louis area, purchase the book from any WildBird type stores, many large and small bookstores, Shaw's Garden and St. Louis Zoo bookstores, or call Paul Bauer at 921-3972.

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From Your President

by Mary Lou Miller

New Volunteers Welcomed!

Dorothy Mill has volunteered to help us with the Community Club Awards by tallying receipts and labels, but we still need a person to chair this committee. This person would take charge of the CCA and work with Dorothy, putting together the tally for the donations we receive from members and friends. This person would then turn the tallies in at the appropriate times to receive awards.

If you would like to be the chair of this committee and work with Dorothy on this project, please call Mary Lou Miller (H# 389-3969).

We have a new volunteer who will be our representative to the Missouri Environmental Fund. Her name is **Christy Beckmann**, director of public affairs for Monsanto. Christy has a background in marketing and sales, plus her experience at Monsanto to help her represent us on this board. We welcome Christy into our volunteer family and hope to get to know her better in the coming year. Her phone number is now published with our list of committee chairs on the back page of the newsletter.

Birdathon Chairperson Needed

St. Louis Audubon is looking for a volunteer to head the Birdathon project during the spring--April, May, and June of 1996. We already have several people who have volunteered to help this year. Plans have been discussed which include a Birdathon with the former Dolphin Defenders, now the Earth Angels. We have a volunteer to lead this birding outing. Also, we might want to do a Birdathon with several people going together to make it more fun.

You don't have to be a birder, just

enthusiastic about our education program--the recipient of the funds generated by Birdathon. If you are interested in this position, please call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969.

Membership Drive to Start in March

In March St. Louis Audubon hopes to get a start on a membership drive. The committee will meet at the Kirkwood office on Tuesday, March 12, at 7:30 pm. If you would like to help with this drive, please attend this meeting. We will make decisions on where we will get our names for contacts for this drive and how we will go about putting the drive together. For more information, call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969.

Office Workday Planned for February 25

An Audubon workday will be held at 1 pm on Sunday, February 25, at the 325 North Kirkwood office to unpack various materials and get our storage room in order.

Thanks to **Mary Smith**, **Dale Ponce**, and **Mary Lou Miller**, who put 1 coat of paint on the shelving in the office on January 21. A second coat of paint and reshelving of hand-outs and other displays are scheduled to be done before this workday.

St. Louis Audubon's office is located on the third floor of the medical arts building at the corner of Washington and North Kirkwood across from the Commerce Bank and next to 2 filling stations, close to Schnucks and Walgreens. If you would like to help with this workday, just show up at the office.

Nominating Committee Named

The nominating committee for the 1996-97 fiscal year has been appointed by the St. Louis Audubon board of directors. Members are:

Paul Bauer (Chair), H# 921-3972
Marshall Magner, H# 961-4588
Karen Haller, H# 227-5693

All nominations for the board of directors or officers should be directed to this committee.

Get to Know . . .

Mary Smith

(This is the ninth in a series of articles written about and by St. Louis Audubon board members themselves so that all our membership can be better acquainted with our decision makers on the board.)

I have never been to Disney World! As a kid, our vacations consisted of piling in the car, boat in tow, and heading for the hills. I grew up in Denver, so we had the Rockies as our playground. Instead of Space Mountain, we had a winding, keep-us-on-the-edge-of-our-seat ride through tight mountain passes. Instead of Splash Mountain, we had boat rides. Instead of Sea World, we swam with the fish (hoping they wouldn't nibble on us)!

In other words, we chose natural settings to man-made structures. In the beginning, it was probably for monetary reasons, but we quickly grew to love and appreciate the great outdoors.

This preference has followed me into adulthood. When friends are at the mall or inside watching TV, you can usually find me at the Busch Conservation Area with a fishing pole in my hands. I have been a volunteer naturalist at Busch for over 3 years and hope that my contribution has opened eyes. Through our workshops, lectures, and hikes, we strive to spread the good word of conservation. I especially like working with kids, watching their eyes light up; they get so excited about our programs. It is very gratifying.

I became involved with Audubon a year ago. During Eagle Days '95, I met several members and was encouraged to get involved with the Audubon Society. It seemed a natural extension of what I was already doing. As the booth and exhibits chairperson, my goal is to get more members involved in the staffing of the booth. Many people think they don't have enough textbook knowledge, but you would be surprised at how much you *do* know and how fun these outings can be. You meet some very interesting people!

I spend my weekdays working in the human resources department at a local hospital. My other interests are volleyball and cycling.

I'm sure one day I will eventually get to Disney World, but I'm in no hurry. There is too much green out there to be explored! It's really **not** a small world after all.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Audubon Bird Walks

Bring binoculars, bird field guide, & dress for field conditions & weather. Coaching & instruction for all levels. Call leader for confirmation & more information.

Riverlands/Pere Marquette -- *Sunday, February 18*, at 8 am. Riverlands is in St. Charles Co. near Alton, IL. Take Hwy 367 north of I-270, across Missouri River to right on last road before Mississippi River. Go east from gas station; turn right on gravel road to Teal Pond parking lot. Leader: Jim Malone, H# 536-1119.

Busch Conservation Area -- *Sunday, March 10*, at 8 am. In St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south of US 40; go 1 mile to a right on Hwy D. Go 1.5 miles to entrance on right. Drive past HQ area through gate to parking lot at Hampton (first) Lake. Leader: Jim Malone, H# 536-1119.

Busch Conservation Area -- *Saturday, March 30*, at 8 am. See directions to Busch in above entry. Leaders: Dave Pierce (H# 434-1651) & Jim Holsen (H# 822-0410).

Woodcock/Owl Prowl -- *Saturday, April 6*, at 5 pm. Special field trip at Busch Conservation Area. See directions in 1st Busch entry. Bring flashlights, boots, & dress for weather. Leader: Jim Malone, H# 536-1119.

Marais Temps Clair bird walk scheduled for April 7 -- **CANCELED!**

Busch Conservation Area -- *Saturday, April 20*, at 8 am. **Bring picnic lunch!** See directions in 1st Busch entry. Leaders: Paul Bauer (H# 921-3972) & Blaine Ulmer (H# 966-5425).

Tower Grove Park -- *Sunday, April 28*, at 8 am. Take I-44 or I-64 east to south on Kingshighway. Go about 1 mile to left on Magnolia. Park on street; walk to brushy area (Gaddy Bird Garden) in park's northwest corner. Leaders: Kevin Renick & Jim Malone, (H# 536-1119).

Audubon-Related Activities

Strategic Planning Committee Meeting -- *Tuesdays, February 20 & March 19* (3rd Tuesday of the month), at 7:30 pm. Held at 325 N. Kirkwood office. For more info., call Dave Tylka, H# 942-3142.

St. Louis Audubon Workday -- *Sunday, February 25*, at 1 pm. Scheduled at 325 N. Kirkwood office to unpack various materials & get storage room in order. See short article on page 2. For more info., call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969.

Bird Workshop Rescheduled -- *Original March 10 date has been changed to Saturday, May 11.* St. Louis Audubon-sponsored workshop will be held at St. Louis Zoo in conjunction with other events celebrating International Migratory Bird Day. Watch for complete information in April newsletter.

Membership Committee Meeting -- *Tuesday, March 12*, at 7:30 pm. Held at 325 N. Kirkwood office. See short article on page 2. For more info., call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969.

West Central Regional River Conference -- *Thursday through Monday, March 14-18*, at Kearney, Nebraska. Theme: Rivers, Wildlife, Partners in Flight; field trip focus: observing sandhill cranes on the Platte River. For more info. & registration materials, call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969.

St. Louis Audubon Annual Dinner & Meeting -- *Friday, April 26*, 6:30 pm at Agusti's Restaurant. See related article on page 1 & reservation form on page . Make your reservations by April 19.

Audubon Society of Missouri Spring Meeting -- *Friday through Sunday, April 26-28*. For more info., call Paul Bauer, H# 921-3972.

Missouri Audubon Council Meeting -- *Sunday, April 28*, 10 am to noon. For more info., call Bill Salsgiver, H# 225-1490.

Field Workshop for Shorebird Identification -- *Saturday, May 4*, at Riverlands &/or St. Charles County. See complete information & registration form on page 5.

National Audubon Society National Convention '96 -- *Saturday through Friday, June 8-14*. Convention held at American University in Washington, D.C. followed by learning labs in Chesapeake Bay & important bird areas in Pennsylvania. Theme: Charting the Future for Habitat Protection. For more info. & registration materials, call Mary Lou Miller, H# 389-3969.

Special Events

Robert Glenn Ketchum Exhibit -- *January 26 through March 15* at the MO Botanical Garden. A major 25-year retrospective collection of works by one of America's most brilliant contemporary landscape photographers. For more info., call 577-9400.

MoNEP (Missouri Nature & Environmental Photographers) Meeting & Program -- *Tuesday, February 20*, 7:30 pm in auditorium of St. Louis County Library Headquarters, 1640 Lindbergh. MoNEP is newly formed organization for people interested in meeting other people concerned about the environment, with photography as a common interest. For more info., call President Ruth Hoyt, 653-1323.

Wings of Spring -- *Sunday, April 14*, at Riverlands. Sponsored by Corps of Engineers. Watch for more details in April newsletter.

1996 Earth Day Community Festival -- *Friday through Monday, April 19-22*. Friday: Town Hall Meeting at MO Botanical Garden; reservations required. Saturday & Sunday: Festival at Tower Grove Park & MO Botanical Garden, 10 am to 5 pm. Monday: Environmental Education Day at MO Botanical Garden, 10 am to 4 pm. For more info. or to volunteer, call Jerry Klamon, director, at 776-4442.

The Conservation Corner

Petition Drive for Parks and Soils Conservation Tax Underway

by Jim Holsen

One of our most urgent activities this spring will be the gathering of signatures on petitions for the reauthorization of the 1/10th of 1 percent sales tax that has funded our Missouri state parks and soils conservation programs. The petitions provide that a constitutional amendment to reauthorize the tax be placed on the ballot for a vote of the people this coming November. Last year, because of conflicting interests between urban and rural legislators, the Missouri General Assembly was unable to agree on a joint resolution for the reauthorization amendment.

Several St. Louis environmental groups, including St. Louis Audubon, Missouri Parks Association, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Sierra Club, and Webster Groves Nature Study Society are working together as St. Louisans for Clean Water and State Parks to place an authorizing amendment on the ballot. Arthur Towers, at the Center for Active Citizenship, has been hired to coordinate the drive. The strategy is to collect as many signatures as possible at large gatherings, such as the several spring shows scheduled for the Convention Center.

About 25,000 signatures had been obtained in the St. Louis area by the end of January. At least 97,000 are needed by the middle of June to ensure that 65,500 validated signatures will be available by the deadline. Cold weather and snow have discouraged attendees from stopping to read and sign petitions.

About 15 years ago before the sales tax was first authorized, our state parks were closed for lack of funds. We don't want that to happen again. Audubon volunteers are badly needed for weekend shifts at the spring shows. Call Jim Holsen at 822-0410 if you can help.

Work to Start on Kennedy Forest Restoration

by Jim Holsen

The Missouri Department of Conservation is ready to begin the restoration of Kennedy Forest, the wooded area in the southwest corner of Forest Park. Rob Emmett, the urban forester who will lead the restoration effort, said that work may begin as early as March.

An informal group consisting of Randy Korotev, Webster Groves Nature Study Society; Ken Cohen, Missouri Coalition for the Environment; Jim Holsen, Audubon; and Ben Senturia met with Rob Emmett to discuss the Department's plans. Initial efforts will include renovation of the restrooms on the high ground west of the Zoo, construction of an interpretive and handicapped accessible trail in a nearby area, and a beginning to the eradication of the honeysuckle vines that smother native vegetation.

Audubon members with an interest in the forest should contact 1 of the 4 group representatives.

During spring migration, through April and May, Kennedy Forest is one of the best places in the metropolitan area to observe a large variety of warblers and other spring migrants. Migrating birds, following the Mississippi, find the forest a refuge in an otherwise massive expanse of brick and concrete. Birders may become acquainted with the area by participating in the spring bird walks sponsored by St. Louis Audubon. Experienced as well as beginning birders find these walks rewarding.

Missouri Legislative Priorities

by Jim Holsen

In early January the Missouri General Assembly convened for its 1996 spring session. Later in mid-January, the Missouri Audubon Council met to prioritize its interests in those bills that had been filed early in the session. Issues of particular interest include the following:

Parks and Soils Conservation Sales Tax -- Ensuring that a constitutional amendment to reauthorize the present 1/10th of 1 percent sales tax that supports our state parks and soils conservation program gets on the November ballot is Audubon's highest priority. The petition drive now underway will accomplish that goal. Missouri Audubon will oppose bills that propose to divert funds from state parks to stormwater control and urban parks. Those goals may be worthy ones, but they should not come at the expense of our state parks.

HB 945. Environmental Audit

Privilege -- Audubon successfully opposed this House bill last year and expects to do so again. An owner of a business subject to environmental regulations, who makes a voluntary audit of his compliance with those regulations and who finds that he is in noncompliance, can make a voluntary disclosure and file a plan for corrective action without penalty. That is present DNR policy. Audubon objects to articles in this bill that leave the disclosure data confidential and unavailable to courts and to citizens who may have suffered harm.

HB 810. Intensive Livestock Agriculture Commission

-- This House bill establishes a commission, appointed by the governor, to promulgate regulations for intensive livestock operations, such as the hog farms that are a growing problem in northern Missouri.

HJR 44. Environmental Bill of Rights

-- This House Joint Resolution would amend the Bill of Rights in the state constitution to provide that all people have a legal right to sustainable use of natural resources and to live and work in an environment protected from harmful pollutants.

SB 616. City Regulation of Billboards

-- This Senate bill authorizes cities, towns, and villages to enforce statutes that apply stricter regulations to outdoor advertising than state statutes. In recent years local statutes have been struck down in cases before the Missouri Supreme Court. Such was the case in St. Louis.

Additional bills with environmental implications are expected to be filed as the session proceeds.

1995 Was For the Birds!

by Jim Malone

There are those of us who believe that birdwatching is always a great way to pass the time, but for the diligent birder, 1995 proved to be a very special year in St. Louis.

Whether it was due to the weather, tireless searching, or just dumb luck, this was a year during which many St. Louis birders were able to see more than 250 different species within 50 miles of home.

In fact, most people didn't even need to venture past their own birdfeeders for great views of such colorful beauties as red-bellied and downy woodpeckers, chickadees, blue

jays, northern cardinals, white-throated and white-crowned sparrows, and white-breasted nuthatches. Some of the luckier feeder-watchers also had opportunities to see red-breasted nuthatches, evening grosbeaks, pine siskins, purple finches, and even a red crossbill among the more usual consumers of suet and seed.

The mild '94 winter months left us with a great variety of waterfowl during the early months of 1995. The Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area near Alton is always a great place to see winter ducks, gulls, and bald eagles. In January and February, large groups of ducks including canvasbacks, redheads, common goldeneyes, American coots, ring-necked ducks, ruddy ducks, buffleheads,

common and hooded mergansers, both scaup species, pied-billed and horned grebes, gadwalls, and mallards paddled about in Ellis Bay and the area under the Clark Bridge.

The deeper water near the Melvin Price Locks and Dam served as a winter rest stop for an occasional surf scoter and a few oldsquaws, which spent most of the winter in the area. During the coldest periods of the winter, bald eagles perched in the trees along Ellis Island or stood on chunks of ice in the river. What fish could be caught were shared by herring gulls and ring-billed gulls, present in abundance near the dam.

Continued on page 6

An Introductory Field Workshop for Shorebird Identification

Do all shorebirds look alike to you? Do they seem **impossible** to sort out and identify? Well, you're not alone. A substantial percentage of birders have problems with identifying shorebirds--not even the experts can confidently identify each and every one of them! However, although admittedly difficult and often challenging, **most** shorebirds can be identified in the field.

The St. Louis Audubon Society announces a special introductory field workshop for shorebird identification to be conducted by Dale Delaney of Delaney EcoTours, Ltd. This workshop is intended to cover the **basics** of shorebird identification: size, shape, plumage, behavior, calls, etc.

We will be searching for and studying the common shorebirds, which typically migrate through our area each spring. Once you have learned to identify these common birds at the species level, then it becomes much easier for you to undertake such challenges as determining the age and/or race of any given individual. And, of course, the more field experience you have, then the better your chances will be of spotting that occasional anomaly or rarity.

WHEN: 8 am to 3 pm, Saturday, May 4, 1996

WHERE: Meet in the parking lot of the West County Shopping Mall located at I-270 & Manchester Road. (We will assemble at the south end of the parking lot near Penney's at lamp post #1 and then carpool to Riverlands and/or St. Charles County.)

FEE: \$10 (All proceeds will be donated to Audubon's education fund.)

In addition to binoculars, the follow items would be helpful to bring along with you:

***spotting scope**

***field guide**

***picnic lunch**

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Dale Delaney at 230-9675 (daytime) or Mary Lou Miller at 389-3969 (evenings).

Field Workshop Registration Form

Name(s): _____

Mailing address: _____

Home phone: _____ Business phone: _____

Please complete this form and return it with your check (payable to **St. Louis Audubon Society**) to the following address:

**St. Louis Audubon Society
3927 Lucas & Hunt Road
St. Louis, MO 63121**

One of the permanent pools of shallow water in the fields near Riverlands was the winter residence for a number of trumpeter swans. Naturally occurring trumpeters have all but disappeared from this area of the country, but these birds (identified by numbered neckbands) were hatched in captivity, then released into the wild in an effort to re-introduce the species. Trips to Lake Baldwin, Lake Carlyle, Horseshoe Lake, and other sites in southern Illinois made it possible to see large flocks of snow geese (and an occasional Ross' goose), Boneparte's gulls, short-eared owls, long-eared owls, and a rather cooperative Harris' sparrow.

Away from the rivers and lakes, groups of horned larks and an occasional Lapland longspur moved about in the bare fields of St. Charles County. Northern harriers glided silently over the weedy fields while red-tailed hawks and American kestrels watched for prey from the telephone poles and wires of country roads.

In spring, summer, and fall, shallow pools and mudflats in the St. Louis area became stopover points for a variety of plovers, sandpipers, and waders. The list of unusual migrants through the area this spring included piping plovers and ruddy turnstones at Riverlands, a sandhill crane circling over the shorebird area near lake 33 at Busch Conservation Area, a wimbrel and a ruff in eastern St. Charles County, and black-necked stilts and a Hudsonian godwit near Kidd Lake in southern Illinois.

One of the best places to find shorebirds and rails in the spring and summer of the year was a series of small marshes that developed along the Sauget Industrial Park Road in southern Illinois. These small wetland pockets provided homes for several species of wading birds including great blue herons, little blue herons, green-backed herons, black-crowned and yellow-crowned night herons, great egrets, and snowy egrets. American and least bitterns could occasionally be seen sneaking around in the taller weeds keeping company with king rails, soras, and common gallinules. As the sandpiper species migrated through the area, good numbers of greater and lesser yellowlegs and common snipes could be found with solitary, stilt, spotted, semipalmated, and least sandpipers.

Even a yellow-headed blackbird (which had not been seen since the flood of '93) was spotted near the Sauget marshes before much of this area was covered with fill dirt later in the summer to make way for industrial park development.

In May, the flooding Mississippi and Missouri Rivers took their toll on a number of St. Charles County areas which were just beginning to see significant regeneration of wildlife habitat damaged or destroyed in the flood of '93. As devastating as these flood waters were to homes and crops along the river, the remaining pools of water helped sustain large populations of waders and shorebirds throughout the summer. One location along highway H in eastern St. Charles County contained amazing numbers and varieties of birds throughout the summer. On different occasions, American avocets, buff-breasted sandpipers, piping plovers, ruddy turnstones, a marbled godwit, western sandpipers, Baird's sandpipers, Caspian terns, common terns, and least terns could be seen in the pools of water. One late August evening, more than 1,000 great egrets were counted in the water and trees along the road as they gathered together in preparation for their southward migration.

Although 1995 was a great year for shorebirds and waders, the passerines (perching birds) were also well represented. A springtime visit to the bird feeders on the Fallen Oak Trail at the Busch Conservation Area often yielded fox and song sparrows, rufous-sided towhees, brown creepers, and a large variety of woodpeckers, while early pine and yellow-rumped warblers moved about in the tops of the short-leaf pines. A wide variety of wood warblers and thrushes were present at locations throughout Busch and the neighboring Weldon Springs areas. Weldon Springs and Busch provided nesting locations for Henslow's sparrows, grasshopper sparrows, blue grosbeaks, Bell's vireos, and prairie warblers.

As usual, Tower Grove Park was a reliable location to find migrating warblers in the spring and fall. Nearly all of the 33 species of warblers seen this year in St. Louis were spotted at some point in the park. On a typical spring day in Tower Grove, one might well see (or hear) northern parulas, magnolia warblers, yellow-rumped warblers, Tennessee warblers, Nash-

ville warblers, American redstarts, chestnut-sided warblers, Cape May warblers, palm warblers, orange-crowned warblers, yellow-breasted chats, ovenbirds, warbling vireos, red-eyed vireos, and solitary vireos. If the day was sunny but somewhat cool, an observer might also get a look at the resident eastern screech owl as it soaked up some sunshine at the entrance to its hole. This fall, a female black-throated blue warbler was also seen for more than a week in the western end of the park.

Another area showing an incredible diversity of birds in 1995 was the Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge near Annada. An early morning trip to the refuge in August found sedge wrens and dickcissels singing from many locations along the road. Further into the refuge, king rails, soras, and Virginia rails were discovered at the edge of a recently drained weedy pool. Pied-billed grebes, nesting American bald eagles, and a nice assortment of shorebirds rounded out the list of birds seen on this excursion.

In October, the St. Louis Audubon Society sponsored a field trip to Clarence Cannon which was equally rewarding. The morning started with a wide variety of sparrows, including swamp, fox, savannah, LeConte's, Lincoln's, American tree, white-crowned, and field species. The wrens were also well represented by sedge, marsh, and Carolina varieties. A good variety of waterfowl and shorebirds were seen at the "Big Pond" including pied-billed grebes, American coots, mallards, gadwalls, Canada geese, pintails, northern shovelers, green-winged teals, blue-winged teals, American wigeons, and common snipes. We were also treated to nearly continuous fly-overs from red-tailed hawks, bald eagles, and a very interested red-shouldered hawk who finally decided that we probably weren't good fare for lunch.

Of course, there were many more great birds and birding excursions in 1995, but they simply won't all fit into this newsletter. If anything in this list sounds interesting to you, why not come out and join us in 1996! The St. Louis Audubon Society has a number of regularly scheduled bird walks each month. Our aim in these walks is for each participant to have a chance to see every bird and learn how we tell the differences between them. So, come out and join us in 1996!

ANNUAL DINNER RESERVATION FORM ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Reservation requests must be returned by Friday, April 19.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26
CASH BAR: 6:30 pm
DINNER: 7:30 pm

SPEAKER:
FIONA MARSHALL
Anthropology Prof.
Washington University

AGUSTI'S RESTAURANT
2300 EDWARDS ST.
ST. LOUIS, MO

Please reserve _____ places at \$16 each for the Annual Dinner.
My check payable to the St. Louis Audubon Society is enclosed.

Please reserve _____ a) assortment entree dinner(s) and/or _____ b) vegetarian dinner(s).

Please complete information below, including phone number. You will receive a call confirming your reservation.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Mail this form & check to:

Katherine Chambers
St. Louis Audubon
7024 Forsyth
St. Louis, MO 63105

Strategic Planning Highlights

by David Tylka

At the **chapter** level, St. Louis Audubon's strategic planning committee met on January 16 at the Kirkwood office and discussed educational challenges and opportunities on the local level. We are still trying to find our educational niche--where we can best meet our chapter goals.

In the past we have promoted and funded *Audubon Adventures* conservation newspapers in fifth grade classrooms on an introductory basis but have not been able to determine the effectiveness of that effort. We have also funded Audubon Camp Scholarships for teachers. Our members have volunteered to organize and present birding seminars, give elementary classroom presentations, work at our educational booths and displays at Eagle Days and teacher workshops, and make available audiovisual materials to teachers and our members.

We are going to continue discussing our educational mission at the February 20 meeting. Anyone interested in participating in these meetings is welcome to meet at 7:30 pm on the third Tuesday of the month or call Dave Tylka at 942-3142 for more information. Subsequent future topics include conservation directions and operational organization.

At the **national** level, the National Audubon Society (NAS) organized into

10 Strategic Plan Implementation Committees--Campaigns, Science, Grassroots, Human Resources, Membership, Field Offices, Nature Centers, Communication, Education, and Finance. These committees are meeting to develop action plans. The Campaign Committee has established criteria to select several conservation issues to pursue for the year rather than trying to spread out in many directions. The Grassroots Committee is exploring a FAX network. For more information on NAS planning efforts, call David Miller at 518/869-9731.



Audubon Members Enjoy Wildlife Art Program

by Sue Smith

St. Louis Audubon members who braved the wind-chilled air on January 18 were warmed to the bone by a delightful program on wildlife art.

Bonnie Rasmussen presented carvings, posters, and sculptures centered on the Mississippian theme. Her program and artwork reminded us

of how the geology and river heritage of the St. Louis area have shaped our culture, economy, and art.

Walter Liddell presented a program titled "The Nature of Nature Photography." His award-winning slides of plants, animals, and naturescapes spanned 5 continents. Included among his photographic tips were:

1. The car makes a good blind.
2. A 600mm lens needs a shoulder support or a tripod.
3. Knowledge of animal behavior and careful observation are a must.

His excellent slide of hornets and their nest included an adventure. The prior evening after the hornets were in the nest, he plugged the entrance hole so surrounding branches could be trimmed. These insects were still angry when he removed the styrofoam plug with a long pole from his car. Walter's care and bravery were also needed for the adorable shots of the great-horned owlets.

Artist-sculptor Gary Carter displayed his original hummingbird sculptures. These tiny birds hovering over silk flowers made us forget the cold. For more information about his art, you may contact Gary at: P.O. Box 494, Herculaneum, MO 63048.

Rex Schmidt shared his collection of birds carved from wood. St. Louis Audubon also displayed art books, stamps, and other collectibles recently donated to the organization.

Thanks to all the presenters for an evening pleasing to the eye!

AUDUBON ADVENTURES



The Education Corner

Audubon Volunteers Work Eagle Days

A record number of people attended Eagle Days 1996, sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation in Clarksville on January 27 and 28. St. Louis Audubon's booth benefitted from the crowd and made over \$1,000 in sales of books, badges, hats, and other items.

Audubon volunteers who worked at the booth were **Bill Brandhorst, Jerry Castillon, Ron Darling, Dianne Johnson, Jim Malone, Mary Lou Miller, Arthur Montgomery, and Sue Smith.**

Those helping the Conservation Department with its program were **Mary Dueren, Jerry Miller, and Mary Smith.**

Summer Employment Opportunities at Audubon Camps

Natural History Instructors

Audubon Camps are operated at sites in Maine, Connecticut, and Wyoming by the National Audubon Society to provide adults with a relaxed educational setting in which to learn more about the natural world around them and the ways in which people are interacting with that world.

Through the use of direct field study, lively lecture/demonstrations, and discussions, the program strives to help participants develop a stronger understanding of basic concepts of ecology; an increased familiarity with the flora, fauna, and physical environment; an increased awareness and

understanding of environmental problems; a greater familiarity with resources and field study skills which will enable them to continue their studies on their own; and a greater desire to put their knowledge and skills to work on environmental matters in their home communities.

Workshop participants range in age from 18 to 80 and in knowledge from those with little or no background to others with considerable field experience. Many are teachers or Scout leaders who are interested in learning both background information and teaching techniques. The program is designed to provide a balance between basic information for beginners and providing new information and/or teaching techniques for those with more experience.

Qualified individuals with teaching experience in a wide range of natural science subjects and ecological disciplines can become a part of the prestigious staff at one of Audubon's camps or workshops. The programs run for approximately 8 weeks from mid-June to late August, and the positions include salary plus room and board at our sites in Connecticut, Maine, or Wyoming.

Student Assistants

The student assistant position provides a combination of hard work, meeting interesting people, and, through attendance in the Audubon ecology workshop and camps program a chance to study the many life forms and physical aspects of forests, fields, ponds, streams, and seashore environments.

As part of the program, each student assistant carries out a field study project. Past projects have included photography of seashore organisms, surveys of ferns, a study of frog vocalizations, breeding bird surveys, studies of bird nesting behavior, and many more. The entire summer is filled with learning opportunities, from stimulating, informal field classes, to individual inquiry and consultation with a project advisor, to interaction with strongly qualified instructional staff and interesting participants in this adult education program.

College-age students interested in summer filled with learning opportunities and great camaraderie in beautiful surroundings should consider joining the staff at the Camp in Maine, Camp

LAST CHANCE -- DON'T BE LEFT OUT!!

JOURNEY TO EAST AFRICA WITH ST. LOUIS AUDUBON 13-DAY BIRDING & WILDLIFE PHOTO SAFARI to KENYA

JUNE 11-23, 1996

\$3,745 per person* including all airfare from New York

YOUR TOUR PRICE INCLUDES:

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- ◆ Group limited to 12 to Focus Attention on Birds & Photos
- ◆ 300 to 400 Species of Birds & 50 Mammal Species Possible; Proven during our June 1995 Trip with the Same Guide
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- ◆ 3 Optional Extension Trips Available: Lake Victoria, West Kenya Forests, & Tanzania

*Double Occupancy; Single Room Supplement is \$525.

Don't Miss This Unique Opportunity in East Africa; Start Making Plans Today.

For a Detailed Color Itinerary write to: St. Louis Audubon, P.O. Box 2085, Florissant, MO 63032 or call Paul Bauer at 314/921-3972.

A local meeting is planned for those interested in going--call Paul at above number for time & place.

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Our Phone Number

To contact the St. Louis Audubon Society, please call (314) 822-6595.

THANK YOU

For Donations to the St. Louis Audubon Society:

ROSALEEN DEVLIN, in memory of Aldith Hayes



Newsletter Information

The St. Louis Audubon Society's *Tale Feathers* is printed bimonthly on recycled paper with soy ink and produced by Dolde Printing Co., 1350 Lonedell Rd., Arnold, MO 63010.

Please send any article submissions for the next edition by **March 22, 1996** to Karen Tylka, 3155 Frisco Hill Rd., Imperial, MO 63052 (H# 942-3142).



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